

BETWEEN FLORENCE AND AVIGNON

Then you will rejoice, and we shall rejoice ; for with love you will have put back the sheep that was lost into the fold of Holy Church. And then, my sweet babbo, you will fulfil your holy desire and the will of God in carrying out the holy enterprise ; to which I invite you in His name, to do it soon and without negligence. And they will join with great affection, for they are disposed to give their lives for Christ. Ah, God, sweet Love! Uplift soon the banner of the most holy Cross, babbo, and you will see the wolves become lambs. Peace, peace, peace ; so that the war may not postpone this sweet time. But if you wish to execute vengeance and justice, wreak it upon me, miserable and wretched woman, and give me every pain and torment that you like, even unto death. I believe that, through the odour of my own iniquities, many defects and many disasters and discords have come. Then upon me, your miserable daughter, inflict whatever punishment you will. Alas, father, I am dying of sorrow and cannot die. Come, come, and no more withstand the will of God which calls you ; the starving sheep are awaiting your coming to hold and possess the place of your ancestor and champion, the Apostle Peter ; for, as vicar of Christ, you are bound to repose in your own place. Come, then, come, and delay no more; take heart and fear nought that could befall, for God will be with you."¹

The Florentines had already appealed to the Cardinals Piero Corsini and Jacopo Orsini to take their part in the papal court, and promised to send ambassadors to prove their innocence. Catherine likewise wrote to these two prelates, imploring them to use their influence in hastening the Pope's coming to Italy and the beginning of the Crusade ; she urged the Florentine Cardinal to labour for the reformation of the Church by his own word and example, and the 'Roman to press the Pope to make peace with the revolted cities.² But the Florentines made no show of laying down their arms, while town after town in the Papal States, including Assisi at the beginning of March, rose against the ecclesiastical officials and joined the league. The two papal

¹ Letter 196 (4).

² Letters 177 (29) and 223 (28).